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U. S. Department of Agriculture

Rare Plants Nursery,  
Linwood, N. Y.

From the pastel by Nassos Daphnis

# Tree Peonies

## HISTORY

The Tree Peony of China was known as "The King of Flowers" and the common herbaceous Peony as "The King's Ministers". In paintings, poetry, and medical texts, references to cultivated forms of it extend back into Chinese history for more than 1400 years. As years went by, tree peonies became more and more widely known, especially in connection with the gardens of the imperial palaces where they never failed to astonish the beholder, "rows upon rows of them arranged in narrow shallow terraces, piled up one behind another — ablaze with blossom". As early as 1785 a single plant was secured for Kew Gardens in England; but it was left to Robert Fortune, the explorer-botanist, to go into Central China and bring back the finest flowers in 1846. To him we owe the wonderful description of a mandarin sitting for hours smoking, drinking tea, and gazing at a Tree Peony covered with 400 flowers.



## THE WILD PLANT

Curiously however, the wild form of this plant has only been discovered within recent years. Among the first to see it was Reginald Farrer, author of "On the Eaves of the World" who writes of finding it near the border of Tibet:

"So I sat at last and rested, gazing down the steep loess tracks to the little village so pleasant-looking in its grove of poplars, till my eye was caught by certain white objects farther along the hillside, that were clearly too big by far to be flowers . . . . Through the foaming shallows of the copse I plunged, and soon was holding my breath with growing excitement as I neared my goal, and it became more and more certain that I was setting eyes on *Paeonia moutan* as a wild plant. The event itself justified enthusiasm but all considerations of botanical geography vanished from my mind in the first contemplation of that amazing flower, the most overpoweringly superb of hardy shrubs. Here in the brushwood it grew up tall and slender and straight, in two or three unbranching shoots, each one of which carried at the top, elegantly balancing, that single enormous blossom, waved and crimped into the boldest grace of line, of absolute pure white, with featherings of deepest maroon radiating at the base of the petals from the boss of golden fluff at the flower's heart. Above the sere and thorny scrub the snowy beauties poised and hovered, and the breath of them went out on the twilight as sweet as any rose. For a long time I remained in worship and returned downward at last in high contentment."

## THE CULTIVATED FLOWER

Plants grown today from seeds are often single whites closely resembling this description of the wild plant. But beautiful though they are, they can not compete in the same class with "Pavilion of Radiance", "Mountain of Sun-lit Snow" (see cut), "Cherry Blossom of the Poet", "White Coiling Dragon", and the long list of other named varieties which are the result of a thousand years of patient selection and improvement. It is difficult to believe that a flower with such qualities has remained one of the rarest of all flowers to American gardeners.



# RARE PLANTS TREE PEONIES

READY FOR YOUR GARDEN NOW.

For centuries the exclusive property of the Imperial Palaces in China, and until recently the privilege of an exclusive few in America, now the gorgeous flowering of this fabulous plant is available to every garden lover. Here is the aristocrat to make your garden more distinctive — to give you that feeling of pride which ordinary flowers can not supply. Plant one in your garden for the admiration of rival gardeners. Cut an opening bud and watch it unfold day by day until you have, floating in a bowl, the fully opened flower, ten inches or more across, with every subtle shading of petal brought out to the full, with every curve and crinkle a miracle of design. Then you will realize the breath-taking loveliness of the “king of flowers”.

The following list is selected from more than a hundred named varieties, the finest, we believe, in America. Most of them are being offered here for the first time.

## WHITE

MOUNTAIN OF SUN-LIT SNOW  
(*Hira-no-yuki*). POET OF CHINA  
(*Hakurakuten*). TRACERY OF  
WHITE JADE (*Tamasudare*).

## PALEST YELLOW

(Shading to delicate shell pink.)  
OPAL PALACE (*Genkimon*).

## ROSE PINK

AGE OF AFFLUENCE (*Jin-juden*). FESTIVAL OF THE  
FOREST PEOPLE (*Shojo-no-mai*).  
HOST TO THE CHERRY BLOS-  
SOM (*Yae-zakura*).

## SHELL PINK

CHERRY BLOSSOM OF THE  
POET (*Saigya-zakura*). JEWEL-  
LED LOTUS (*Tama fuyo*). FOR-  
EST MIST (*Kasumi-no-mori*).

## SALMON

LION IN HIGH SPIRIT (*Ukare-jishi*). LION'S MANE (*Kagura-jishi*). SUN BANNER (*Hinomaru*). WAVES OVER THE COR-  
AL SHORE (*Naniwa nishiki*).

## RED

NOBLE ORANG OUTANG (*Im-asyojo*). TYRANT OF BLACK  
FLAME (*Ubatama*).

SIZE 1—5th to 8th year (heavy) .....	\$7.50
SIZE 2—3rd and 4th year (field grown) ....	\$5.00
SIZE 3—1st and 2nd year (pot grown) .....	\$3.00

NOTE — Since our supply in each size and each variety may not correspond with the demand, we are filling orders only according to color group.

## SPECIAL OFFER

Realizing that not more than one gardener in a thousand now owns a tree peony, we are making a special introductory offer. You will be getting not only one of the world's oldest and most beautiful flowers, but also a plant outstanding for its hardiness, vigor and resistance to insects and disease. At the following special prices you may have “one red, one pink, and one white” (or your choice of three from the five color groups) selected by us from the named varieties listed above.

Size 1	Three Plants (value \$22.50)	\$17.50
Size 2	Three Plants (value \$15.00)	12.50
Size 3	Three Plants (value \$9.00)	7.50

**RARE PLANTS**  
N U R S E R Y  
LINWOOD · NEW YORK



# RARE PLANTS YEW

(*TAXUS CUSPIDATA*)

## ARISTOCRAT OF THE EVERGREENS

Everywhere recognized as the most valuable of the evergreens, the YEW TREE is absolutely hardy, free from disease, and extremely vigorous. It grows equally well in sun or shade and will flourish where all else would fail. Yew is also strikingly beautiful for its deep green color and strong branching character. These qualities combine to make an appearance of rich distinction. There is a variety for every purpose:—

### DWARF (*Taxus cuspidata nana*)



low, very slow growing. 4" to 6". bushy, 50 cts. each; 5 for \$1.75; 30" to 36", \$7.50 each.

### COLUMNAR (*T. cuspidata hicksi*).



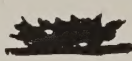
Tall, strong growing, finest for specimens or hedges. 8" to 12". 75 cts. each, 5 for \$3.00; 15" to 18". \$1.50 each, 5 for \$6.25; 18" to 24". \$2.00 each, 5 for \$8.75; 24" to 30", \$2.50 each, 5 for \$11.00.

### PENDULOUS (*T. baccata repandens*).



Tips of branches extremely graceful (protect from winter sun and wind). 12" to 15". \$1.00 each, 5 for \$3.75; 15" to 18", \$1.25 each, 5 for \$5.00; 18" to 24", \$1.50, 5 for \$6.25.

### SPREADING (*T. cuspidata*). The



common form. 9" to 12", \$1.00 each, 5 for \$3.75; 18" to 24", \$2.50, 5 for \$11.00.

### TREE FORM (*T. cuspidata capitata*).



May be sheared to any form, or, if let alone, makes an open tree. 8" to 12", \$1.00 each, 5 for \$3.75; 12" to 15", \$1.25, 5 for \$5.00; 15" to 18", \$1.75, 5 for \$7.50.

### SPECIAL OFFER

One Each of the Five Varieties (Dwarf, 5" to 6"; Columnar, 12" to 15"; Pendulous, 9" to 12"; Spreading, 9" to 12"; Tree form, 12" to 15") for only \$3.25 (Value \$4.75)

These plants are 4 to 6 years old, heavy specimens, at least 3 times transplanted. Supply limited.

## MISCELLANEOUS RARE PLANTS

**HARDY BOXWOOD** (*Buxus microphylla koreana*) 6" to 9", 15 cts. each, \$10 per 100; 9" to 12", 20 cts. each, \$15 per 100.

**PYRAMIDAL HORNBEAM** (*Carpinus betulus fastigiata*) 12" to 18", \$1.25 each.

**GIANT AUTUMN CROCUS** (*Colchicum bornmuelleri*; c. "lilac wonder"; c. *speciosum*; c. sp. "early flowering") 60 cts. each; \$2.50 for 5.

**BARRENWORT** (*Epimedium mucronatum*) 4" pots, 50 cts. each.

**COLLECTION OF EVERGREEN EVONYMUS** (*Evonymus radicans* var. *acutus*; var. *carrieri*; var. *coloratus*; var. *vegitus*) 5 yr. 50 cts. each, 5 for \$1.75.

### KENTUCKY COFFEE TREE

(*Gymnocladus dioica*) 2 ft. to 3 ft. 25 cts. each; 10 for \$2.00.

**PAEONIA LUTEA.** The yellow tree peony, small yellow and red flowers, very pretty and graceful.

5 yr. plants — \$5 each

**CORK TREE** (*Phelodendron amurense*, or p. *lavelli*) 4 ft. to 5 ft. 75 cts. each.

**TWO RARE OAKS:** Pyramidal English (*quercus robur fastigiata*) 3 ft. to 4 ft. \$2.50 each. Shingle Oak (*quercus imbricaria*) 6" to 9" 35 cts. each.

**SCHOLAR TREE** (*Sophora japonica*) 2 ft. to 3 ft., 50 cts. each.

All plants guaranteed to be true to name. Please send cash or check with order, or one-fourth with order and balance C.O.D. All transportation charges are to be paid by purchaser. Boxing on B & B items at cost. Prices subject to change without notice.



## DESCRIPTION

Tree Peonies differ from the common herbaceous Peony in two conspicuous ways:— 1) they develop rough-barked woody stems which, instead of dying back to the ground each winter, continue to grow year after year so that a bush (not a tree) is formed four to six feet tall and as many feet across; 2) the flowers are much larger (9 to 12 inches across) than those of the herbaceous Peony and come two weeks earlier. The finest colors are found in the new named varieties which have come to this country only within the last fifty years, and these are now available to every garden lover for the first time. The purity of their whites, pinks, salmons, and reds can not be described in words; nor can the delicacy of their blossoms be imagined. There is a daintiness about the semi-doubles and an airiness and sparkle in the full doubles which is indescribable. These qualities were mostly lacking in earlier importations. The color range in the yellow hybrids is also new and very fine.

Every Tree Peony here offered has been grafted on a herbaceous root which is not a stock of any permanence but merely a "temporary nurse which will keep the top alive for a few years while it is forming its own roots".

## USE IN THE GARDEN

A Tree Peony is usually the most notable plant in a garden and may well be given the place of honor. A single specimen can hold the focal point in an intimate design; two look well as accents on each side of steps or the entrance path; four can be used in a balanced design at the corners of a flagged area reflected in a pool. Or a group of Tree Peonies are perfectly adapted as a middleground for the flower border with Lilacs in full bloom in the background. When not in blossom, Tree Peonies are still extremely handsome and an addition to any garden composition for the beauty of their leaves, the gesture of their branches, and rich autumn color.



## CULTURE

Tree Peonies grow in any good garden soil and are hardy in the latitude of Boston, Buffalo, and Lansing. The fact that one can find big bushes fifty or more years old in abandoned gardens around New York, Philadelphia, and in Western New York proves that the Tree Peony will not only thrive here but that it will survive extreme neglect and continue to bloom freely year after year. They thrive best in positions sheltered from heavy winds, away from heavy tree roots, and prefer but do not require partial shade. Those purchased in roofing paper pots are best because then planting may be done in fall or spring, even in full bloom. Dig your hole a foot wider and six inches deeper than the pot, tear off the bottom and the collar and cut some slits in the sides with a sharp knife but leave in place so as to keep the earth held firmly around the roots. The point where the stem has been grafted to the root-stock should be about three inches below the ground line. Fill the hole with good loamy top soil and pack firmly. Do not use manure. Stake, water thoroughly, and leave two inches of loose earth or peat to preserve the moisture. A good soaking once a week is needed for the first season, and for the first two winters hill up like a rose. A potted plant may bloom the first spring, usually blooms the second.

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